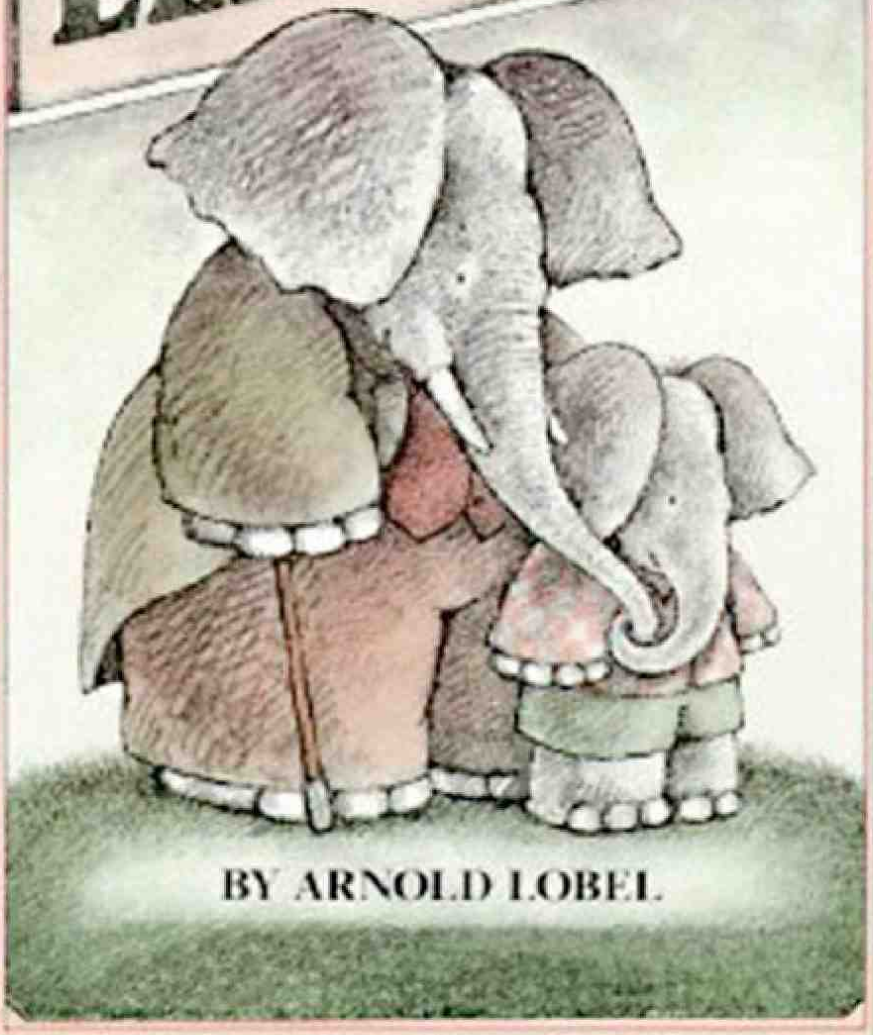
An I Can Read Book

LEVEL 2 Grades 1-3

# UNCLE ELEPHANT



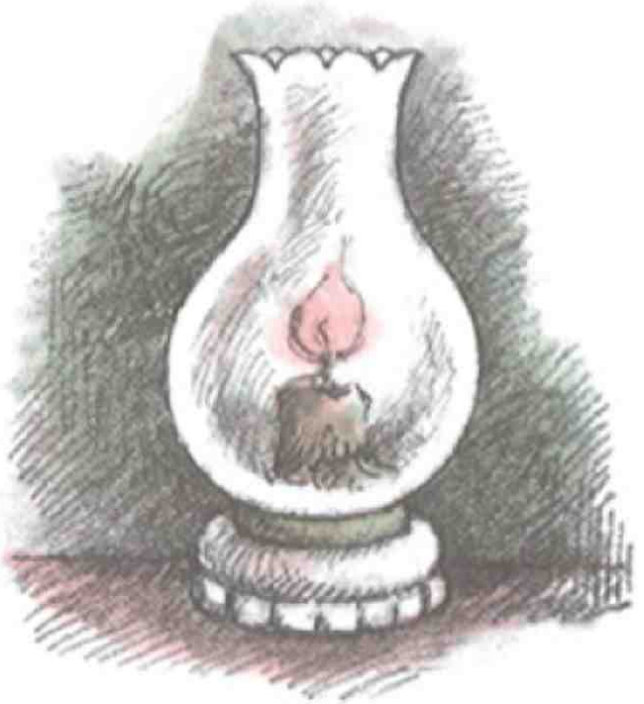
BY ARNOLD LOBEL

# UNCLE ELEPHANT

By ARNOLD LOBEL

HarperCollins e-books

*For Charlotte Zolotow*



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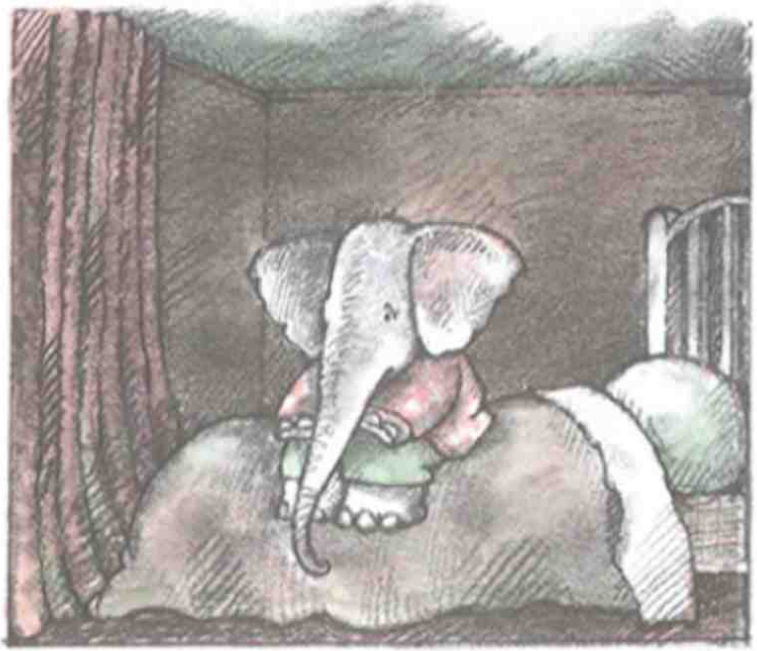
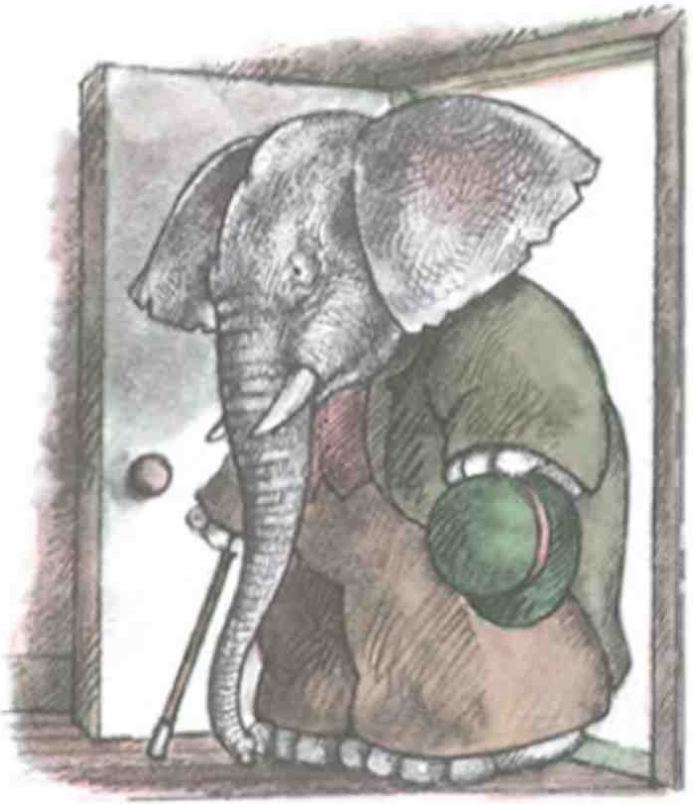
# Uncle Elephant Opens the Door

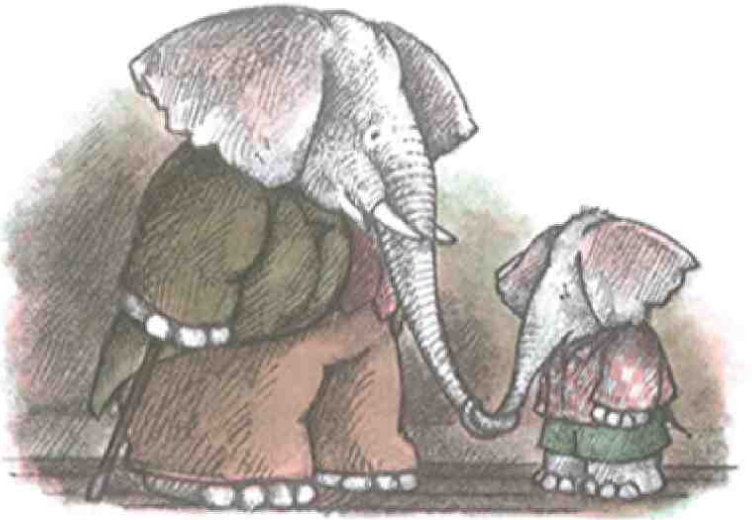
Mother and Father went for a sail in their boat.
I could not go with them.
I had a runny trunk and a sore throat.
I went home to bed.
There was a storm.
The boat did not come back.
Mother and Father were missing at sea.
I was alone.
I sat in my room with the curtains closed.



I heard my door opening.
"Hello, I am your Uncle Elephant," said a voice.
I looked at Uncle Elephant.
"What are you staring at?" he asked.
"Ah, I know, you are looking at my wrinkles."
"You *do* have many wrinkles," I said.
"Yes," said Uncle Elephant, "I have more wrinkles than a tree has leaves.

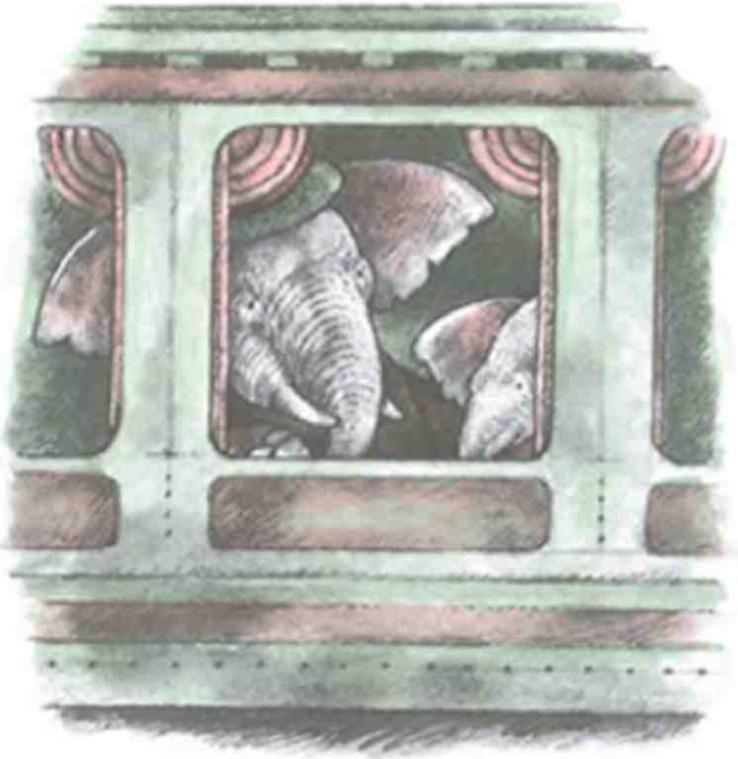


I have more wrinkles than a beach has sand.
I have more wrinkles than the sky has stars."
"Why do you have so many wrinkles?" I asked.
"Because I am old," said Uncle Elephant.
"Now come out of this dark place."
"Where will I go?" I asked.
"Come and visit me," said Uncle Elephant.



# Uncle Elephant Counts the Poles

I sat with Uncle Elephant on the train.
We shared a bag of peanuts.
We looked out of the window.
The country rushed past.
"One, two, three. Oh, I missed one," said Uncle Elephant.
"What are you counting?" I asked.
"I am trying to count the houses as they go by," he said.



"One, two, three, four.
I missed one again," said Uncle Elephant.
"What are you counting?" I asked.

"I am trying to count the fields as they go by," he said.
"One, two, three, four, five.
I missed another one," said Uncle Elephant.
"What are you counting now?" I asked.
"I am trying to count the telephone poles as they go by.
But everything is passing too darn fast," said Uncle Elephant.
Uncle Elephant was right.
Everything *was* passing very fast.
"One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten!" said Uncle Elephant.

"What are you counting this time?" I asked.
"I am counting the peanut shells," said Uncle Elephant.
"They are easier to count.

They are all in one place.
They are all sitting on your lap."
The train raced along.
We finished the whole bag of peanuts.

There were many more shells for Uncle Elephant to count.

# Uncle Elephant Lights a Lamp

We came to Uncle Elephant's house.
"We will light a lamp and have some supper," said Uncle Elephant.
He took a lamp from the shelf and lit it.
"Hey there!" said a small voice from inside the lamp.
"Did you hear that?" asked Uncle Elephant.
"This lamp can talk!" "It is a magic lamp!" I said.

"Then we can make wishes!" said Uncle Elephant.
"I wish for an airplane that I can fly myself," I said.

"I wish for a polka-dot suit with striped pants," said Uncle Elephant.

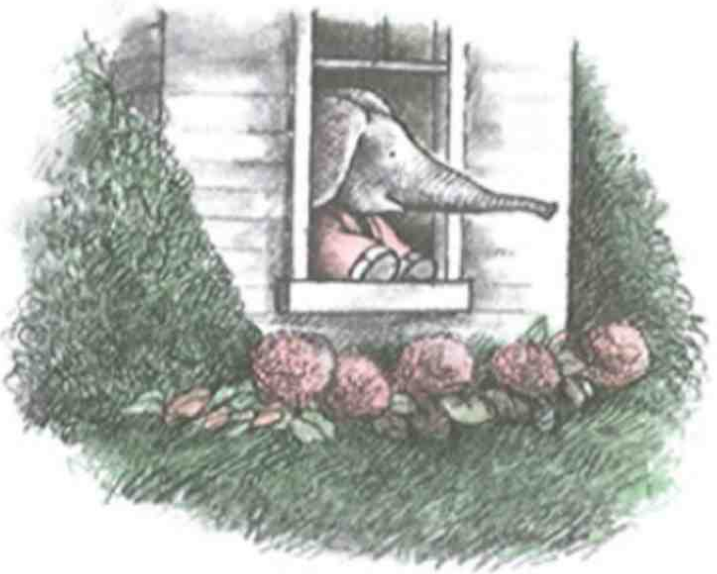
"I wish for a banana split with ten scoops of ice cream," I said.

"I wish for a box filled with one hundred big cigars," said Uncle Elephant.
We rubbed the lamp. We sat and waited.
A little spider crawled out.

"I wish that you would turn off this lamp and leave me in peace," said the spider.
"I live in there.
It is getting hot."
Uncle Elephant made the spider's wish come true.
He was happy to turn off the lamp.
Uncle Elephant put the lamp back on the shelf.
We ate our supper by the light of the moon.

# Uncle Elephant Trumpets the Dawn

"VOOMAROOOM!" It was morning.
I heard a noise outside.
I ran to the window.
Uncle Elephant was standing in the garden.



His ears flapped in the breeze.
He raised his trunk.
"VOOMAROOOM!" trumpeted Uncle Elephant.
"What are you doing?" I asked.

"I always welcome the dawn this way," said Uncle Elephant.
"Every new day deserves a good, loud trumpet."
"I have planted all these flowers myself.
Come outside and let me introduce you to everyone," said Uncle Elephant.
"Roses, daisies, daffodils and marigolds, I want you to meet my nephew."
I bowed to the flowers.
Uncle Elephant was pleased.

"This garden is my favorite place in the world," said Uncle Elephant.
"It is my own kingdom."
"If this is your kingdom," I said, "are you a king?" "I suppose I am," said Uncle Elephant.
"If you are the king," I said, "I must be the prince."
"Of course," said Uncle Elephant, "you *must* be the prince!"
We made ourselves crowns of flowers.
Uncle Elephant raised his trunk.
"VOOMAROOOM!" I raised my trunk.

"VOOMAROOM!" We were the king and the prince.
We were trumpeting the dawn.

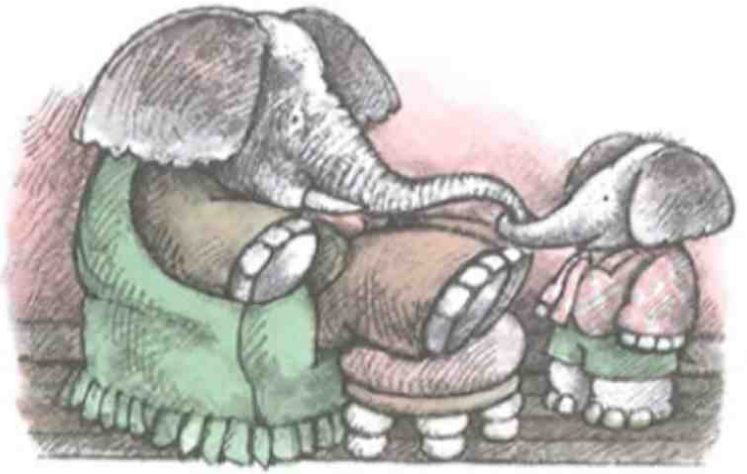
# Uncle Elephant Feels the Creaks

Uncle Elephant and I went for a walk.
"Ouch!" cried Uncle Elephant.
"What is the matter?" I asked.
"I am feeling the creaks," said Uncle Elephant.
"What are the creaks?" I asked.
"Sometimes they happen to old elephants like me," he said.
"My back creaks, my knees creak, my feet creak, even my trunk creaks.
The creaks are quite uncomfortable."
We walked slowly home.
Uncle Elephant sat down carefully in his softest chair.

"Ah," he said, "the creaks in the bottom part of me are gone."
Uncle Elephant rested his head on the back of the chair.
"Ah," he said, "the creaks in the top part of me are gone."

Uncle Elephant put his legs on the footstool.
"Ah," he said.
"The creaks in my feet are gone."
"Are you feeling better?" I asked.

"Almost," said Uncle Elephant.
"If you let me tell you a story, I am sure all of my creaks will go away."



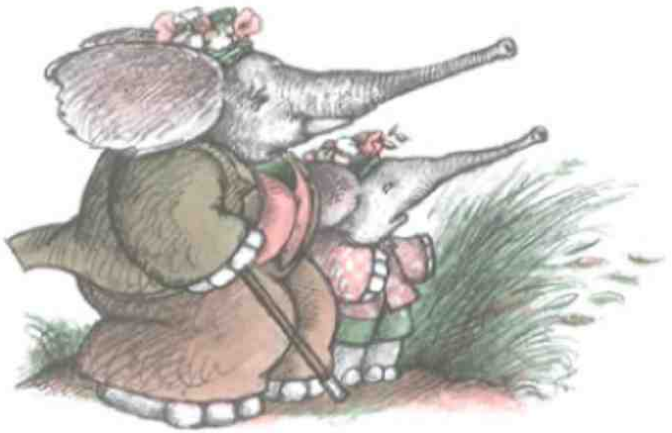
# Uncle Elephant Tells a Story

"Once there was a King and a Prince," said Uncle Elephant.
"The Prince was brave.
He was young and smart.
The King was old.
He had many wrinkles.
"They lived in a castle at the edge of a woods.
One day the King and the Prince went for a walk.
They became lost in the woods.
'Oh, help!' cried the King.
'Do not worry,' said the Prince.

'We will find our way home.'
"'Oh, help and ouch!' cried the King.
'I am tired.
I am creaking all over.
I want to go home.
I want to sit in my chair.'

"They wandered in circles for hours.
They could not find their castle.
A lion jumped out at them. 'A king and a

prince! Just what I want for dinner!' roared the lion.

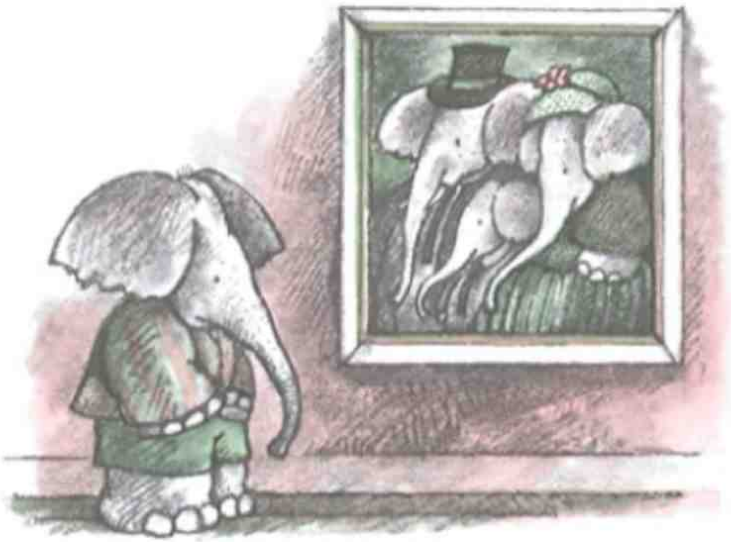


"He showed them his sharp teeth.
The King and the Prince raised their trunks.
'VOOMAROOOM!' They both trumpeted as loudly as they could.
The lion was so afraid that every one of his teeth popped out.
He ran away.

"The King tried to look over the tops of the trees.
'My old eyes are weak,' he said.
'I can't see a darn thing.'
'King,' said the Prince, 'my eyes are sharp.
Lift me up on your head.'
The King lifted the Prince.
"The Prince looked over the tops of the trees.
'There it is!' he cried.
'I can see the tower of our castle.
Now we are not lost!'

"And that," said Uncle Elephant, "was how the King and the Prince helped each other to find their way home."
Uncle Elephant had ended his story.
"There," he said, "that does it.
From top to bottom I do not feel a single creak!"

# Uncle Elephant Wears His Clothes



There was a picture in Uncle Elephant's living room.
"That is a picture of me when I was your age," said Uncle Elephant.
I looked at the picture.
Uncle Elephant was with his mother and father.
They looked just like mine.
I felt sad.
I began to cry.
Uncle Elephant looked sad too.

"Now, now," he said, "let's not have any of this.
I must do something to make us happy.
"I will wear some funny clothes.
That will make us smile." Uncle Elephant opened his closet door.

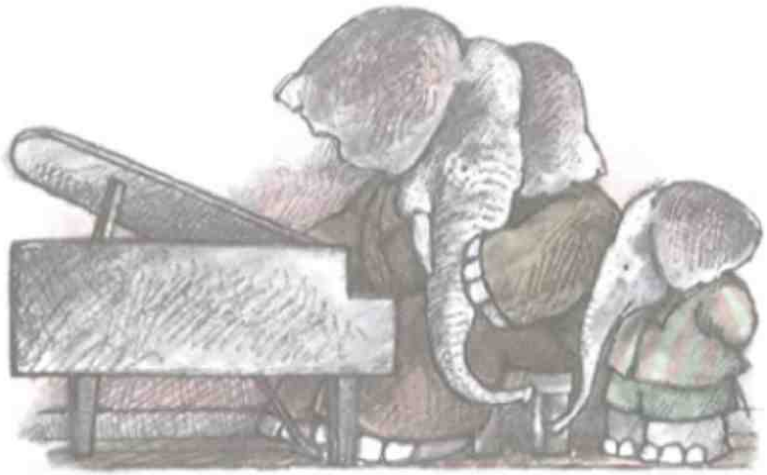
He looked at his hats and his ties and his shirts and his pants and his jackets.
"My clothes are not funny," said Uncle Elephant.

"What can I do?" Uncle Elephant went into his closet.
In a while he came out.
He was wearing all of his hats, all of his ties, all of his shirts, all of his pants, and all of his jackets.

Uncle Elephant was wearing everything on top of everything.

Uncle Elephant was a pile of clothes with two big ears.
First I smiled.
Then I giggled.
Then I laughed.
We both laughed so hard, we forgot to feel sad.

# Uncle Elephant Writes a Song



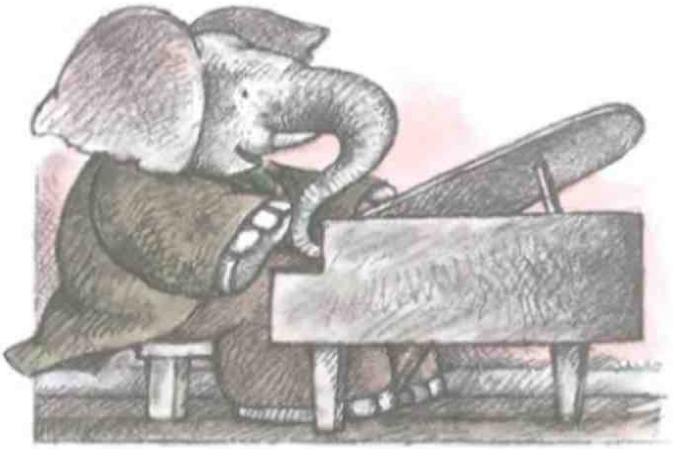
"Sing a song for me," said Uncle Elephant.
"I don't know any songs," I said.
"Not one?" asked Uncle Elephant.
"Not even one," I said.
"Then I will write you a song of your own," said Uncle Elephant.
He wrote the words of the song on a piece of paper.

"I have a song.
It's an elephant song.

I will sing it whenever I please.
With my trunk in a loop, I will sing while I swoop from the vines and the branches of trees.

"I have a song.
It's an elephant song.
I will sing it wherever I go.
Upside down on my head, with my ears as a sled, I will sing as I slide through the snow.

"I have a song.
It's an elephant song.
I will sing it whatever I do.
When I sing while I munch on my peanutty lunch, I will not miss a note as I chew.



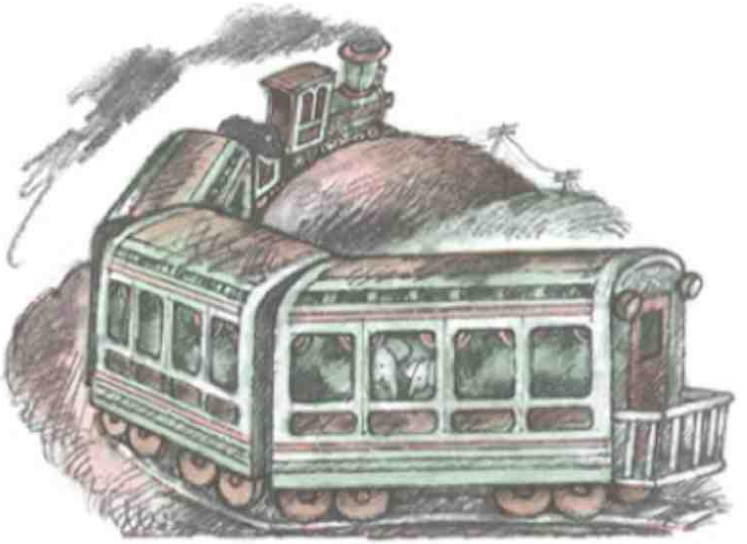
"I have a song.
It's an elephant song.
I will sing it and never forget that, of all music played, there is no better made than an uncle and nephew duet."

Uncle Elephant made up a tune to go with the words.
Together, we sang my song.
We sang it over and over.

# Uncle Elephant Closes the Door

One day a telegram came to Uncle Elephant's house.
It was from my mother and father! They had been found and rescued.
They were alive!
Uncle Elephant and I danced for joy.
"I must take you home at once," he said.

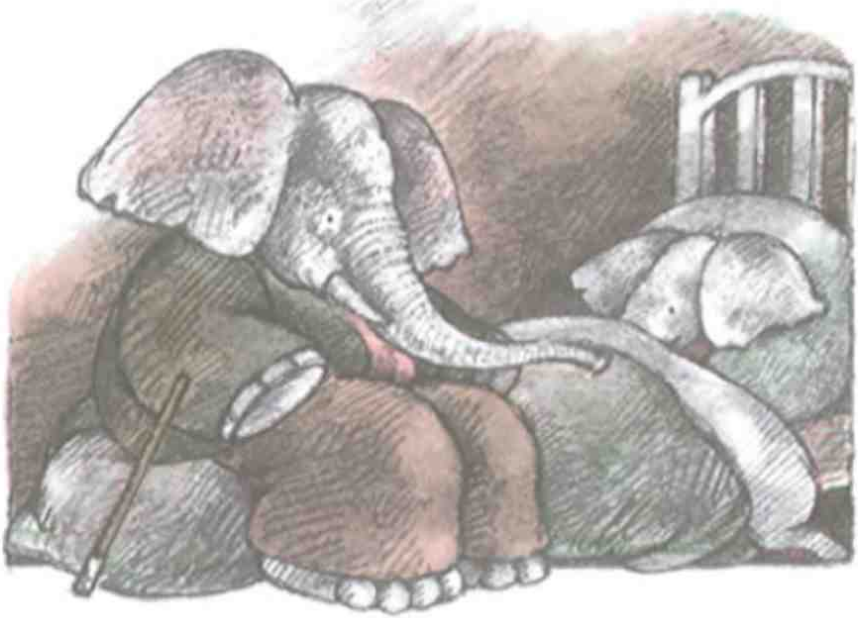
I sat with Uncle Elephant on the train.
We looked out of the window.
"One, two, three, four…" said Uncle Elephant.
"Are you counting the houses?" I asked.
"No," said Uncle Elephant.
"Are you counting the fields?" I asked.
"No," said Uncle Elephant.



"I know," I said.
"You are counting the telephone poles."
"No," said Uncle Elephant.
"Not this time."

Mother and Father were waiting for us.
I rushed into their arms.

That night, after a fine dinner, I sang my song.
Uncle Elephant played the piano.
Before I fell asleep, Uncle Elephant came into my room.
"Do you want to know what I was counting on the train?" he asked.
"Yes," I said.
"I was counting days," said Uncle Elephant.



"The days we spent together?" I asked.
"Yes," said Uncle Elephant.
"They were wonderful days.
They all passed too fast."
We promised to see each other often.

Uncle Elephant kissed me good night and closed the door.

# *Dear Parent:*
# *Your child's love of reading starts here!*

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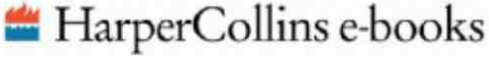

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